

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

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FULL CAMPGROUNDS EXPECTED FOR MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

It seems like it was only last week Iowans were facing another round of snow storms, but Memorial Day Weekend is quickly approaching and that marks the busy season for Iowa’s state park campgrounds. Nearly all reservable campsites with electricity have been spoken for so campers who do not have a reservation will need to either arrive early or call ahead to see if any first-come, first-serve campsites are available.

“The weather has not been too agreeable for early season camping, so we are anticipating a large crowd for Memorial Day Weekend,” said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of the Iowa State Parks Bureau with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “It’s going to be nice to see campgrounds full again, people fishing in the parks and having a good time. I think it is safe to say we are all ready for summer.”

For many campers, Memorial Day Weekend will be the first outing of the year. Szcodronski said campers are reminded to be courteous to their neighbors and keep the noise level down during quiet time. He also said to avoid any unpleasant surprises campers should go through their gear to make sure it is still in working order and to replace anything not in usable condition.

Check the batteries in the flashlight and the bottles of propane. Pick up an extra set of lantern mantles, just in case. Make sure the cot still functions or the air mattress does not leak. Pack garbage bags, and ponchos and a deck of cards in case it rains. Don't forget aluminum foil and a can opener.

"Take some time to inspect the camping gear before leaving home because it is much easier to take care of at home, rather than at the campsite," he said.

Check the tents and sleeping bags for tears or signs of wear and tent poles for cracks. Make sure all the stakes made it home from the last trip. Go through cooking equipment, fire starters and matches. Check the first aid kit, shower house bag and the supply of bug repellent and sun screen.

"With all the new electronic 'necessities' our younger campers can not live without, it would be wise to bring a surge protector for cell phones and other games and music players," Szcodronski said.

Campers are encouraged to get their firewood local sources and to definitely not bring firewood from out of state. Szcodronski said parks staff will also be discouraging campers from burning anything in a fire ring other than wood, and that includes scrap lumber.

"You would not believe the things that are burnt in the fire ring. Our staff finds all kinds of trash, melted plastic, plywood scraps, empty cans, lawn chairs, and old pieces of metal. Burning that stuff releases pollutants into the air and debris in the fire ring. So we are going to visit with campers about why we only want firewood used in the rings," he said.

For more information, contact Mick Klemesrud at 515-281-8653.

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NEW MANDATORY LIFE JACKET LAW FOR YOUTH

DES MOINES - A new boating law was signed into law by Iowa Governor Chet Culver on May 10 requiring children under age 13 to wear a life jacket while in a boat that is underway. The law became effective on May 10.

“This is a good law and we are glad to have it,” said Randy Edwards, assistant chief of the DNR’s Law Enforcement Bureau and past president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

The new law states “a person shall not operate a vessel in Iowa unless every person on board the vessel who is age 12 and under is wearing a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.” A lifejacket must be worn when the vessel is underway, which means when a vessel is not at anchor, tied to a dock or the bank/shore or aground.

A child age 12 and under in an enclosed cabin, below deck, or aboard a commercial vessel with a capacity of 25 persons or more is exempt.

There are only two states remaining without some age requirement for life jackets for children – Wisconsin and Virginia.

For more information, contact Edwards at 515-281-6154 or Susan Stocker, boating education coordinator for the DNR, at 515-281-0122.

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IOWA WALLEYE: WIDESPREAD GAINS FOR ANGLERS AS RESEARCHERS BUILD FISHING “FIELD OF DREAMS”

DES MOINES - No one who has ever seen *Field of Dreams* can forget the signature line from that motion picture: “Build it and they will come.”

What if the scenario of a mythic Iowa cornfield was changed just a bit: no ball diamonds, but fishing lakes amidst fields of Iowa corn? And what if the fabled legend to emerge from another era was a fish, one that’s particular about its need for clear, clean water?

The fish is the walleye. The State is Iowa. And the tale is completely true.

Walleye are not the easiest fish to raise in a hatchery. In fact, they present some very unique and difficult challenges to hatchery managers. But because the walleye is so popular with anglers, many states invest considerable time and money to assure their success.

Iowa’s approach to improving its walleye fishery has always been guided by two goals: fostering better fishing, and stocking a healthy, hatchery raised fish that survives well after stocking in lakes and streams.

The Iowa DNR began a comprehensive effort to improve its walleye fisheries more than 25 years ago. According to Marion Conover, Fisheries bureau chief, surveys

showed that walleye were among the most sought-after sport fish by anglers. Yet, the species enjoyed only limited natural reproduction in much of the state.

“Many Iowans may not realize the science and research behind the great walleye fishing we now have in Iowa,” said Conover. “It’s a fascinating process of understanding the biology of fish survival and growth, and our researchers have dedicated many hours of time to building a successful walleye fishery our anglers can enjoy for many years to come.”

While DNR researchers have been able to demonstrate that stocking walleye fry – newly hatched fish -- can survive and grow to an angler-acceptable size, many lake and stream environments make survival of these tiny fish very difficult. In addition, research has shown that stocking larger walleye fingerlings in lakes produces better survival rates and thus better harvests for anglers.

Getting walleye fingerlings to an advanced stocking size, however, required innovation and a willingness to explore new techniques. One method pioneered by Iowa involves transferring walleye fry from hatchery ponds to tanks in dark rooms, where they are trained to accept a specially formulated high-protein pellet feed.

“The darkened room reduces stress on the young fish, which in turn increases acceptance of the new diet and growth of the small fish,” said Conover.

As a result, Iowa enjoys unusually high survival rates from the fry stage to larger fingerling available for stocking. This past year the survival rate was 85 percent, an almost unheard of achievement when compared to other methods.

Iowa’s work has focused on refining its efforts. Along the way, the DNR has been able to show, quite compellingly, that improved water quality not only yields better angling success, but contributes dramatically to increased outdoor recreational use as well.

The proof? One Iowa state park, Lake Ahquabi in Warren County, saw its visitation figures grow tenfold, from 60,000 visits per year to 600,000, due to its dramatically improved water quality and recreational fishing.

Other Iowa lakes benefiting from the walleye research program include Big Creek, Rathbun Reservoir, Sugema Lake, West Okoboji, DeSoto Bend, Manawa, Storm Lake, Black Hawk Lake, Brushy Creek, Lake Icaria, Little River Lake, Three Mile, Twelve Mile and Clear Lake, all of which are now prime walleye fishing venues because of stocking large walleye from state hatcheries.

The walleye work carried out in Iowa was made possible by the sales of Iowa fishing licenses and by the federal Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) program. SFR dollars are those funds derived from special excise tax monies collected on fishing tackle and motorboat fuel. These are the funds provided by anglers and boaters each time they

purchase the equipment and fuel essential to their outdoor pursuits.

“Every time an Iowa angler buys a license or purchases fishing gear or boat fuel, they are making a real difference to Iowa’s lakes and fish,” said Conover.

The DNR’s groundbreaking work will have valuable applications well beyond the Hawkeye State, as other states learn from Iowa’s example, proving once again that “if you build it they will come.”

For more information, contact Mike Mason, Supervisor of Hatcheries, (515) 281-6072 or Andy Moore, Rathbun Fish Hatchery/Research Supervisor (641) 647-2406

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[electronic photo available]

COOL WEATHER LEADS TO POOR MUSHROOM CROP

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Temperatures are warming and the countryside is turning green. For Iowa mushroom hunters, it’s a sure signal to head for local woodlands in search of the state’s most popular wild edible --- the succulent morel mushroom.

As is the case with most ‘catch it and eat it’ wild cuisine, the annual morel harvest is a boom or bust, feast or famine proposition. This spring, following four straight years mushroom mega-crops, Iowa appears to have entered the much dreaded mushroom recession.

In southern Iowa, the harvest is being rated at anywhere from fair to good. Generally speaking, the farther north you travel the sparser the crop.

During most bust years, poor mushroom production is attributed to unseasonably dry weather. Not the case this year. Heavy winter snowfall across most of Iowa was followed by ample [often excessive] spring rains. But what continues to be lacking, says experts, is much needed heat. With subsurface woodland soil temperatures warming at a snail’s pace, most spores continue to remain dormant.

This year, even the morel rich, limestone bluff country of the upper Mississippi River has failed to produce the much anticipated crop. In what should now be the peak of this spring’s harvest, even the most seasoned locals are hard pressed to find more than a hand full or so of mushrooms during an outing. Pros that usually number their take by the hundreds are now fortunate to find more than a dozen or so in the usual secret haunts.

At rural Mississippi River food markets, fresh morels are currently fetching anywhere from \$27 to more than \$30 a pound and demand often exceeds supply. Last year at this time, mushroom enthusiasts could purchase all they cared to haul at \$15 to \$18 per pound.

Across the northern half of Iowa, the spring morel season is currently about half way through. And although a series of two or three hot days could still lead to some good finds, there's no doubt that 2008 will go down as the year mushroom hunters would just as soon forget.

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SAFE BOATING EVENTS PLANNED FOR NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK

The public is invited to a safe boating event scheduled at Saylorville Lake on May 18, as part of National Safe Boating Week, which runs from May 17 to 23. The event will be staged at Lakeview boat ramp and Cherry Glen boat ramp, from noon to 4 p.m.

Boating safety experts from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Iowa State Patrol will be on hand to offer tips and explain boating rules.

Participants can have a vessel safety check conducted by the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 33-04 and try on new lightweight life jackets at the Lakeview boat ramp. At the Cherry Glen boat ramp, the DNR will be on hand to discuss the rules of the road, try on new lightweight life jackets and required safety equipment, and the State Patrol will help with boat trailer techniques.

The sponsors will be giving away safe boating take-home guides, information on boater education courses and there will be an opportunity to win an Annual Pass with passing a Vessel Safety Check.

With National Safe Boating Week beginning next week, the deadline to enter the DNR coloring contest is quickly approaching. The coloring contest promotes the importance of wearing a life jacket while recreating on the water. Entries must be post marked by May 19.

The contest is open to children ages 7 to 11 and a copy of the contest picture is available online at www.iowadnr.gov then click on Boater Education Program.

The DNR is again partnering with Mustang Survival who is donating five youth life jackets. The winner from each age group will be awarded a life jacket. The winners will be announced that week as a part of National Safe Boating Week.

To qualify for the contest, please put your age on the front of the coloring poster and your name, address and phone number on the back. This will ensure the DNR can accurately put posters in the proper age group and contact the winners.

According to national statistics, 90 percent of all drowning victims died because they were not wearing their life jackets. The DNR is focusing strongly on making Iowa's waterways safer for everyone.

For more information, contact Susan Stocker, boating education coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 515-281-0122.

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DNR OFFERS SPRING FLING OPPORTUNITIES

DES MOINES — As Iowans enjoy spring, Keepers of the Land, the volunteer program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), offers many statewide volunteer events and opportunities to keep that “spring fling” exciting.

- **State Trap Shoot Event:** Officials with the Shooting Sports Program are seeking volunteers to assist with a youth trapshooting event on May 17. Volunteers are needed to help in scoring shooters, providing supervision and loading trap machines. Volunteer training will be provided on the day of the event. For more information contact Ben Berka at 515-281-0140.
- **Campground Host Opportunity:** Officials at state parks throughout the state are seeking volunteers to serve as campground hosts for the upcoming camping season. Hosts are offered free on-site camping and assist park staff by greeting campers, answering visitor questions, and completing various maintenance tasks to ensure the camping area is welcoming to the public. State parks currently seeking volunteer hosts include: Green Valley (Union Co), Lacey-Keosauqua (Van Buren Co), Lake Anita (Cass Co), Lake Ahquabi (Warren Co), Ledges (Boone Co), Palisades-Kepler (Linn Co), Pikes Peak (Clayton Co), Pleasant Creek (Linn Co), Prairie Rose (Shelby Co), and Stephens State Forest (Lucas Co). For more information contact Elizabeth Gull at 515-281-0806.
- **Spring Operation ReLeaf and Plant Some Shade Events:** Spring tree distribution events will be held in May throughout the state in the following communities: Keokuk, Indianola, and Mason City on May 17, and Lansing on May 31. Volunteers are needed to help with various event set-up and logistics needs. For more information contact Matt Brewer at 515-242-6892 or Jessica Flatt at 515-281-6749.
- **GRASS – Great Race Against Shade and Shrubs Event:** Officials with the Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area, in Castana, are seeking volunteers to remove harmful shrubs from prairie remnants and restored prairies within the Loess Hills on May 30. Volunteers should bring handsaws, loppers, and chain saws if they have

them. GRASS is an annual event that kicks-off the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar. For more information contact Merry Rankin at 515-281-0878.

A full listing of volunteer opportunities and events is available at www.keepersoftheland.org.

For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov

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HIGH SCHOOL AND YOUTH TRAP SHOOTING SEASON CONCLUDES ON SATURDAY

The Iowa High School and Scholastic Clay Target Program is expecting more than 400 kids from nearly 70 schools to compete in the state trap championships on May 17 at the State Trapshooting Association Homegrounds, in Cedar Falls. The shoot will be the culminating event for the 2008 shooting season.

Braving strong winds and cold temperatures since March 1, high school, middle school and even a few elementary aged shooters have been practicing and competing around the state in trap, skeet and sporting clays events. High school all state teams will be crowned based on the cumulative totals of the season's invitational events plus the state championship events.

A free fun shoot sponsored by the Iowa DNR will be conducted for youth ages 11-18 who are not participating in the main events. Pre-registration is required. Complete details can be found in the event program on the Iowa DNR website: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/law/shootingsports/files/2008stateprogram.pdf>

State championship events are being co-hosted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa High School Clay Target Association, the Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program, Inc., Iowa State Trapshooting Association and the New Pioneer Gun Club.

Last Saturday, 68 shooters took part in the state skeet and sporting clays championships at the New Pioneer Gun Club in Waukee. Results are as follows:

Sporting Clays

Rookie Division Individual

1st Robbie Thomas 52x100 (Des Moines Area Clay Crushers)

2nd Lake Heaton 47x 100(Oskaloosa)

Intermediate Entry Level Team

- 1st Des Moines Area Clay Crushers 197x300 (Dustin Drier, Logan Lyon, Cole Wycoff)
- 2nd Oskaloosa MS 1 191x300 (Nic DeJong, Drew McGee, Brandon Sage)
- 3rd Oskaloosa MS 3 161x300 (Jordan Lowry, Clay Manoit, Brandon Strasser)

Intermediate Advanced Team

- 1st Des Moines Area Clay Crushers 1 203x300 (Sam Mraz, Wyatt Powers, Will Thomas)
- 2nd Des Moines Area Clay Crushers 2 179x300 (Matt Delanoit, David Kenninger, Brooke Vogel)

Junior Varsity Team

- 1st Oskaloosa 3 235x300 (Adam Givens, Tyler Kindley, Malaki Wills)

Varsity Team

- 1st Oskaloosa 1 234x300 (shootoff winner) (Alex Heaton, Ryan Smithart, Jake Van Polen)
- 2nd Pella 1 234x300 (Ryan Lanke, Brent Smith, Tommy Van Haaften)
- 3rd Waukee 230x300 (Cody Hauschel, Joel Pinkerton, Grant Rutz)

Individual Girl

- 1st Erica Van Polen 66x100 (Oskaloosa)
- 2nd Brooke Vogel 62x100 (Des Moines Area Clay Crushers)

Individual Boy

- 1st Cody Hauschel 92x100 (Waukee)
- 2nd Brendan Appel 90x100 (Norwalk)
- 3rd Josh Vande Noord 89x100 (Pella)
- 4th Chad Gleason 88x100 (Dallas Center Grimes)
- 5th Adam Givens 86x100 (Oskaloosa)

Skeet

Rookie Division Individual

- 1st Lake Heaton 56x 100(Oskaloosa)
- 2nd Robbie Thomas 51x100 (Des Moines Area Clay Crushers)

Intermediate Entry Level Team

- 1st Des Moines Area Clay Crushers 208x300 (Dustin Drier, Logan Lyon, Cole Wycoff)
- 2nd Oskaloosa MS 1 188x300 (Nic DeJong, Drew McGee, Brandon Sage)
- 3rd Oskaloosa MS 3 155x300 (Jordan Lowry, Clay Manoit, Brandon Strasser)

Intermediate Advanced Team

- 1st Des Moines Area Clay Crushers 1 229x300 (Sam Mraz, Wyatt Powers, Will Thomas)
- 2nd Des Moines Area Clay Crushers 2 203x300 (Matt Delanoit, David Kenninger, Brooke Vogel)

Junior Varsity Team

- 1st Oskaloosa 3 205x300 (Adam Givens, Tyler Kindley, Malaki Wills)

Varsity Team

- 1st Oskaloosa 1 256x300 (Alex Heaton, Ryan Smithart, Jake Van Polen)
- 2nd Waukee 231x300 (shootoff winner) (Cody Hauschel, Joel Pinkerton, Grant Rutz)
- 3rd Pella 1 231x300 (Ryan Lanke, Brent Smith, Blaize Van Rheenen)

Individual Girl

- 1st Erica Van Polen 73x100 (Oskaloosa)
- 2nd Brooke Vogel 64x100 (Des Moines Area Clay Crushers)

Individual Boy

- 1st Chad Gleason 97x100 (Dallas Center Grimes)
- 2nd Ryan Smithart 94x100 (Pella)
- 3rd Brendan Appel 91x100 (Norwalk)
- 4th Jeremiah DeWitt 88x100 (Oskaloosa)
- 5th Logan Lyon 86x100 (Waukee)

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IOWA RESIDENTS ENJOY FREE FISHING DAYS JUNE 6 - 8

DES MOINES - Iowa residents may fish for free on June 6, 7 and 8, when the Iowa Department of Natural Resources waives the requirement that anglers possess a valid fishing license while fishing. The free fishing weekend is for Iowa residents only and all other fishing laws are in effect.

“This first weekend in June is typically a great time to fish. Fish are usually close to shore and are willing to bite. It’s a great time to take children fishing or to introduce someone new to fishing,” said Marion Conover, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Bureau.

Fishing is an activity that can be done during any stage in life and is a great way to spend time together as a family.

“We want people to fish because it is a good, wholesome activity,” Conover said. “If someone needs a little instruction, there are fun, hands-on fishing clinics available to teach parents or kids the basics of fishing.”

A list of fishing clinics, derbies, and other fun events co-sponsored by the DNR is available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/education/files/clinic.pdf>

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FISHING EVENTS SET FOR SPRING AND SUMMER

GUTHRIE CENTER - Following are several fishing events scheduled around Iowa and listed in order by county. Whether you want to learn to fish at a clinic, compete for prizes at a tournament, or just have some fun, there is something for everyone. For more information about individual events, call the number listed.

Buena Vista County Youth Fishing Contest/Clinic will be held at 9 a.m., June 7, at Gustafsen Lake, south of Sioux Rapids. The youth fishing contest will be held during free fishing weekend to encourage families to go fishing as a form of family recreation. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Lisa Meusbarger, with the Buena Vista County Conservation Board, at 712-749-2563 or lmeusbarger@co.buena-vista.ia.us

Black Hawk County - George Wyth Family Fishing Event will be held at 10 a.m., June 7, at George Wyth State Park. The first 200 participants who complete all four stations will receive a free hot dog and water. There will be other prizes and giveaways. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Holly Schulte, Iowa DNR, at 319-624-3568 or holly.schulte@dnr.iowa.gov

Cedar County Fishing Clinic will be held at 9 a.m., May 31, at Cedar County's Bennett Park, shelter 3. There will be six exciting, hands-on stations for participants, followed by an hour of fishing at the pond. There will be fun prizes handed out throughout the morning along with good fishing information. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Reba Reddick, Cedar County Conservation Board, at 563-886-6930 or at cedarccb@iowatelecom.net.

Crawford County is hosting a Fabulous Fishing Clinic at 10 a.m., June 7, at Yellow Smoke Lake, east of Dennison. The event will focus on basic tackle, casting, fish identification, fish cleaning and cooking and the clinic is open to the public. For more information, contact Kelly Sonnichsen, Crawford County Conservation Board, at 712-263-3409 or at kmac@frontiernet.net

Dallas County Youth Fishing Derby will be held at 9 a.m., June 7, at the Glissman Nature Area. There will be six exciting, hands-on stations followed by an hour of fishing at the pond. There will be a lot of fun prizes handed out during the morning mixed in with a lot of information. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Beth Waage, Dallas County Conservation, at 515-202-1703 or bethwdallas@iowatelecom.net

Davis County Kids Fishing Day will be held at 10 a.m., June 7, at the McGowen Recreation and Wildlife Area, east of Bloomfield. The clinic will showcase fishing techniques, fish identification, safety tips and have awards for big fish. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Rick Krenz at 641-664-2572 or dccboard@netins.net

Des Moines County Conservation Fishing Derby will be held at 9 a.m., June 7, at Gahn Wildlife Refuge, near West Burlington. There will be prizes awarded for the biggest and most fish in two age categories and the event is open to the public. For more information, contact Kim Perlstein, Starr's Cave Nature Center, at 319-753-5808 or starcave@co.des-moines.ia.us

Take a Kid Outdoors will host an Outdoor Fun day in Fayette County at 10 a.m., May 17, at Houg Educational Farm, east of West Union. Participants will meet at Houg Educational Farm for seed planting, fishing and hiking. There will be fish identification, casting practice and knot tying. Fishing rods are available through the Fayette County Conservation Board, if needed. Lunch and a beverage will be provided. Participants 16 years old and older will need a valid Iowa fishing license. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Gary Richards, Take a Kid Outdoors, at 319-753-6396 or contact@takeakidoutdoors.org

Take a Kid Outdoors is hosting How Many Bites Can You Get fishing clinic in Fayette County at 10 a.m., June 7, at Volga River State Recreation Area. Fish identification will be provided by the Iowa DNR, casting practice with the Fayette County Conservation Board, lots of fishing, with lunch and a beverage provided. Fishing rods are available, if needed. The clinic is open to the public. For more information, contact Gary Richards, Take a Kid Outdoors, at 319-753-6396 or contact@takeakidoutdoors.org

Harrison County's Kids Fishing Derby will be held at 9 a.m., June 7, at Willow Lake Recreation Area, near Woodbine. All participating kids will receive a prize. The event is sponsored by the Woodbine Kiwanis and Harrison County Conservation Board (CCB) and is open to the public. For more information, contact Connie Betts, Harrison CCB, at 712-647-2785 or cbetts@harrisoncountyparks.org

Howard County Conservation Seventh Annual Kids' Fishing Clinic and Derby will be held at 8:45 a.m., June 7, at Vernon Springs Mill Pond, two miles south of Cresco. The fishing clinic and derby is open to kids ages 5 to 14 who attend school in Howard County. The event will have three learning stations and include one hour of fishing. Prizes will be awarded in three categories. For more information, contact Angela Bries, Howard County Conservation Board, at 563-547-3634 or howardccb@yahoo.com

Jasper County – Hook, Line and Sinker Fishing Derby will be held at 9 a.m., June 7, at Mariposa Recreation Area, northeast of Newton. There will be workshops in the morning covering fish identification, water quality, fish cleaning, water safety and casting. Lunch is provided. There will be fishing and casting contests in the afternoon. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Nathan Unsworth, Jasper County Conservation Board, at 641-792-9780 or nunsworth@co.jasper.ia.us

Jefferson County – Kids' Fish'n Fun Day will be held at 1 p.m., June 8, at Tracht Conservation Farm, northeast of Fairfield. Participants will learn about casting and landing a fish, fish identification and how to clean and cook the catch. The event will

conclude with a fishing derby and prizes. Fish'n Fun Day is open to the public. For more information, contact Lisa Phillips, Pathfinders RC&D, at 641-472-6177 or lisa.phillips@rcdnet.net

Johnson County Conservation Board's Free Youth Fishing Clinic will be held at 2 p.m., July 7, at F.W. Kent Park boat ramp, three miles west of Tiffin. This general fishing event is designed to teach participants the basics of fishing from equipment to techniques. Some bait and fishing rods will be provided. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Brad Freidhof, Johnson County Conservation Board, at 319-645-1011 or bfreidhof@co.johnson.ia.us

Jones County – Annual Central Park Kids Fishing Derby will be held at 8 a.m., June 7, at Central Park Lake, northeast of Anamosa. Morning activities include a casting contest put on by the Wapsi Valley Bass Masters, education seminars by local anglers and educational displays. Prizes will be awarded at noon. A lunch stand is available. The event is open to the general public. For more information, contact Michele Olson, Jones County Conservation Board, at 563-487-3541 or naturalist@co.jones.ia.us

Linn County – Cedar Lake Family Fishing Event will be held at 10 a.m., June 7, at Cedar Lake, in Cedar Rapids. The first 200 participants who complete all four stations will receive a free hot dog and water. There will be giveaways and prizes awarded. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Holly Schulte, Iowa DNR, at 319-624-3568 or holly.schulte@dnr.iowa.gov

Linn County – Youth Fishing Derby will be held at 9 a.m., June 7, at Pinicon Ridge Park near the canoe rental building, near Central City. There will be prizes awarded to all participants. The event is open to all youth ages 17 and under. For more information, contact Chuck Ungs, Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center, at 319-892-6485 or chuck.ungs@linncounty.org

Polk County – Fishing Basics event will be held at 2 p.m., June 21, at Jester Park, near shelter 5, near Granger. The event will have a 30 minute presentation on safety and equipment needed for fishing, followed by 2.5 hours of hands-on fishing. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact James Dotzler, Polk County Conservation Board, at 515-249-0702 or jdotzle@co.polk.ia.us

Polk County – Fishing Basics event will be held at 6 p.m., July 9, at Thomas Mitchell Park, south of Mitchellville. There will be a 30 minute presentation followed by 1.5 hours of hands-on fishing. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Charlie Finch, Polk County Conservation Board, at 515-250-1031 or cfinch@co.polk.ia.us

Polk County – Fishing Basics event will be held at 2 p.m., Aug. 9, at Easter Lake, shelter 1, in southeast Des Moines. There will be a 30 minute presentation followed by 2.5 hours of hands-on fishing. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact

James Dotzler, Polk County Conservation Board, at 515-249-0702 or jdotzle@co.polk.ia.us

Scott County – Mark Twain Pioneer Summer Youth Camp will be held at 12:30 p.m., Aug. 7, at Lake Pride, nine miles north of Davenport. Camp participants will enjoy a variety of aquatic recreation opportunities including paddle boating, learning fishing skills, safety, fish identification, casting and lake fishing. There will be a tour of Mississippi River Lock and Dam 15. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Jo Noon at jnoon@scottcountyiowa.com or Dave Murcia at jmurcia@scottcountyiowa.com or by calling 563-271-0316.

Story County – Kids Fish will be held at 9 a.m., May 17, at Ada Hayden Heritage Park, north of Ames. This is a free fishing derby for kids. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Andy Long, JAX Outdoor Gear, at 515-292-2276 or along@jaxmercantile.com

Story County – Kids Fishing Derby will be held at 1 p.m., June 8, at Hickory Grove Park, southwest of Colo. This is a non-competitive fishing derby to promote fun family outdoor activities open to the general public. For more information, contact Jerry Keys, Story County Conservation Board, at 515-232-2516 or jkeys@storycounty.com

Tama County Youth Fishing Seminar will be held at 12:20 p.m., June 17, at Otter Creek Lake and Park, northeast of Toledo. The seminar is limited to 30 participants and pre-registration is required. The fishing seminar is for boys and girls age 10 to 13 and will cover safety and ethics, fish biology and behavior, how to locate fish and improve success, different lures and baits and how to use each, general knot tying and casting techniques. For more information, contact Bob Etzel, Tama County Conservation Board, at 641-484-2231 or tccb@tamacounty.org

Winnebago County – Kids' Fishing Derby will be held at 10 a.m., May 31, at Thrope Park's Lake Catherine, five miles west of Forest City. Kids age 15 and younger can compete for prizes in two age groups. Fishing rods and equipment are available, if needed. For more information, contact Lisa Ralls, Winnebago County Conservation Board, at 641-565-3390 or lralls@winnebagoccb.com

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